



# California Regional Water Quality Control Board Los Angeles Region



Linda S. Adams  
Agency Secretary

Recipient of the 2001 *Environmental Leadership Award* from Keep California Beautiful

Arnold Schwarzenegger  
Governor

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Ms. Belinda Kwan  
Los Angeles County Dept. of Public Works  
P.O. Box 1460  
Alhambra, CA 91803-1460

## **WATER QUALITY CERTIFICATION FOR PROPOSED STURTEVANT DEBRIS BASIN POST FIRE ENLARGEMENT PROJECT (Corps' Project No. 2003-00411-AOA), SIERRA MADRE WASH, CITY OF SIERRA MADRE, LOS ANGELES COUNTY (File No. 08-103)**

Dear Ms. Kwan:

Board staff has reviewed your request on behalf of LA County Dept. of Public Works (Applicant) for a Clean Water Act Section 401 Water Quality Certification for the above-referenced project. Your application was deemed complete on August 8, 2008.

I hereby issue an order certifying that any discharge from the referenced project will comply with the applicable provisions of sections 301 (Effluent Limitations), 302 (Water Quality Related Effluent Limitations), 303 (Water Quality Standards and Implementation Plans), 306 (National Standards of Performance), and 307 (Toxic and Pretreatment Effluent Standards) of the Clean Water Act, and with other applicable requirements of State law. This discharge is also regulated under State Water Resources Control Board Order No. 2003 - 0017 - DWQ, "General Waste Discharge Requirements for Dredge and Fill Discharges that have received State Water Quality Certification" which requires compliance with all conditions of this Water Quality Certification.

The Applicant shall be liable civilly for any violations of this Certification in accordance with the California Water Code. This Certification does not eliminate the Applicant's responsibility to comply with any other applicable laws, requirements and/or permits.

Should you have questions concerning this Certification action, please contact Valerie Carrillo, Lead, Section 401 Program, at (213) 576-6759.

[Original Signed By]

October 1, 2008

\_\_\_\_\_  
Tracy J. Egoscue  
Executive Officer

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**California Environmental Protection Agency**



*Our mission is to preserve and enhance the quality of California's water resources for the benefit of present and future generations.*

## **DISTRIBUTION LIST**

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P.O. Box 532711  
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Eric Raffini (via electronic copy)  
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 9  
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San Francisco, CA 94105

Jim Bartel  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
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# ATTACHMENT A

## Project Information File No. 08-103

1. Applicant: LA County Dept. of Public Works  
P.O. Box 1460  
Alhambra, CA 91803-1460  
Phone: (626) 458-6135 Fax: (626) 979-5436
2. Applicant's Agent: Belinda Kwan
3. Project Name: Sturtevant Debris Basin Post Fire Enlargement
4. Project Location: Sierra Madre, Los Angeles County

<u>Longitude</u>	<u>Latitude</u>
118° 02' 23.22" W	34° 10' 17.92" N
118° 02' 22.10" W	34° 10' 18.07" N
118° 02' 22.05" W	34° 10' 21.22" N
118° 02' 23.24" W	34° 10' 20.46" N
118° 02' 22.66" W	34° 10' 18.09" N
118° 02' 22.11" W	34° 10' 19.48" N
118° 02' 22.66" W	34° 10' 20.85" N
118° 02' 23.19" W	34° 10' 19.48" N

5. Type of Project: Debris basin enlargement
6. Project Purpose: The purpose of the proposed project is to enlarge the debris basin to contain a debris flow equal to one debris design event.
7. Project Description: The Santa Anita Fire burned significant portions of the front range of the San Gabriel Mountains above Sierra Madre in May 2008. The fire burned a total of 584 acres and affected the communities of Sierra Madre and Arcadia.
- The fire burned approximately 75 percent of the canyon watershed above Sturtevant Debris Basin. The estimated total potential debris amount from the burned area is almost up to the Design Debris

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Event (DDE) of 5,500 cubic yards (CY) for the facility's watershed.

The debris basin has a maximum capacity of 1,400 CY, which is 25 percent of the watershed's DDE. Due to the potential for extensive mud and debris flows that may result from rainfall on a freshly burned watershed in this canyon, improvements to the existing debris protection facility is necessary to protect properties located below the burned area. Debris flows that cannot be contained within the debris basin may potentially impact several residential properties. Specifically, four residential properties and two streets (Lotus Lane and Camillo Street) could be impacted by overflow from the debris basin. The resultant debris deposition of the two streets could significantly impact the sole vehicle access, especially emergency vehicle access, to a total of 12 to 13 homes.

Public Works is proposing to enlarge the storage capacity of Sturtevant Debris Basin as a post fire debris protection measure.

The debris dam and basin work will consist of: raising the height of the debris dam and the existing outlet tower by 12 feet; expanding the footprint of the debris basin by approximately 3,000 square feet (0.07 acres); adding a retaining wall at street level on the west side of the basin; adding a new catch basin and drain from the adjacent street to the dam's spillway; adding a new access ramp in front of the dam, from the street to the top of the dam; adding another access ramp from the top of the dam to the basin bottom, with a retaining wall for a length of the ramp; and adding new fencing in front of the dam and on top of the west retaining wall. Impacts to waters of the United States will be temporary and due to the construction activities.

Due to the expense associated with the scale of the measures needed for protection from the existing post fire condition, these improvements will be permanent to make them more cost-effective. The resultant facility will be compliant with Public Works' flood protection standard of one DDE.

8. Federal Agency/Permit: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers  
NWP No. 18 (Permit No. 2003-00411-AOA)

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9. Other Required Regulatory Approvals: California Department of Fish and Game Streambed Alteration Agreement
10. California Environmental Quality Act Compliance: The proposed project is Categorical Exempt from CEQA pursuant to the CEQA Guidelines, Section (e.g., 15302 Replacement or Reconstruction).
11. Receiving Water: Sierra Madre Wash (Hydrologic Unit No. 402.10)
12. Designated Beneficial Uses: MUN\*, GWR, REC-1, REC-2, COLD, WILD, RARE, SPWN, WET  
  
\*Conditional beneficial use
13. Impacted Waters of the United States: Streambed: 0.08 temporary acres
14. Dredge Volume: None
15. Related Projects Implemented/to be Implemented by the Applicant: Public Works proposed to construct two Rail & Timber structures in the City of Sierra Madre to provide debris protection to local neighborhoods due to the May 2008 Santa Anita Fires. The structures include:  
1. Stonehouse Rail & Timber Structure  
2. Yucca Rail & Timber Structure  
  
The two proposed projects were determined by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to be located outside waters of the United States. The proposed Stonehouse and Yucca structures outlet on to paved streets, construction of the structures will occur in dry areas. The debris retaining function of the structures will lessen post-fire debris impacts to Sierra Madre Wash.

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#### 16. Avoidance/ Minimization Activities:

The Applicant has proposed to implement several Best Management Practices, including, but not limited to, the following:

To reduce potential impacts to water quality, construction of the proposed project will implement the following project provisions:

- Project will comply with the provisions of the State's General Construction Activities Permit (General Permit). The project would also conform to the requirements in the latest edition of the Los Angeles County Department of Public Works "Construction Site Best Management Practices Manual" (BMP Manual).

Erosion control and grading plans will include:

- Temporary soil stabilization through scheduling work outside of the wet season as much as possible, preservation of existing vegetation, mulching, hydroseeding, soil binders (if permitted), erosion control blankets, earth dikes, drainage swales, and/or slope drains.
- Temporary sediment control through silt fencing, desilting basins, sediment traps, check dams, fiber rolls, barriers or berms, street sweeping, and/or stormdrain protection.
- Wind erosion control.
- Tracking control through stabilization of construction entrances/exits and roadways, and/or tire washes.
- Non-storm water management through water conservation practices and during vehicle equipment cleaning, fueling, and maintenance, dewatering operations, or stream crossings.
- Waste management and material pollution control including management of stockpiles, solid waste, hazardous waste, contaminated soil, concrete waste, sanitary waste, and liquid waste, spill prevention/control, and proper material delivery, use, storage, and disposal.

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17. Proposed  
Compensatory  
Mitigation: The Applicant has proposed to provide mitigation at at 1:1 ratio by utilizing 0.08 acres of credit from the Los Angeles County Department of Public Works (LADPW) Big Tujunga Mitigation Bank.
18. Required  
Compensatory  
Mitigation: The Regional Board will require a minimum of 1:1 compensatory mitigation ratio for impacts associated with the proposed project. LADPW will provide a credit of 0.08 acres from the Big Tujunga Mitigation Bank as an offset for project impacts within jurisdictional waters.
- Attachment B, Conditions of Certifications, Additional Conditions for modifications and additions to the above proposed compensatory mitigation.*

## ATTACHMENT B

### Conditions of Certification File No. 08-103

#### STANDARD CONDITIONS

Pursuant to §3860 of Title 23 of the California Code of Regulations (23 CCR), the following three standard conditions shall apply to this project:

1. This Certification action is subject to modification or revocation upon administrative or judicial review, including review and amendment pursuant to §13330 of the California Water Code and Article 6 (commencing with 23 CCR §3867).
2. This Certification action is not intended and shall not be construed to apply to any activity involving a hydroelectric facility and requiring a Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) license or an amendment to a FERC license unless the pertinent Certification application was filed pursuant to 23 CCR Subsection 3855(b) and the application specifically identified that a FERC license or amendment to a FERC license for a hydroelectric facility was being sought.
3. Certification is conditioned upon total payment of any fee required pursuant to 23 CCR Chapter 28 and owed by the Applicant.

#### ADDITIONAL CONDITIONS

Pursuant to 23 CCR §3859(a), the Applicant shall comply with the following additional conditions:

1. The Applicant shall submit to this Regional Board copies of any other final permits and agreements required for this project, including, but not limited to, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' (ACOE) Section 404 Permit and the California Department of Fish and Game's (CDFG) Streambed Alteration Agreement. **These documents shall be submitted prior to any discharge to waters of the State.**
2. The Applicant shall adhere to the most stringent conditions indicated with either this certification, the CDFG's Streambed Alteration Agreement, or the ACOE Section 404 Permit.
3. The Applicant shall comply with all water quality objectives, prohibitions, and policies set forth in the *Water Quality Control Plan, Los Angeles Region (1994)*.
4. The Avoidance/Minimization activities proposed by the Applicant as described in Attachment A, No. **16**, are incorporated as additional conditions herein.

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### **Conditions of Certification File No. 08-103**

5. The Applicant and all contractors employed by the Applicant shall have copies of this Certification, the approved maintenance plan, and all other regulatory approvals for this project on site at all times and shall be familiar with all conditions set forth.
6. Fueling, lubrication, maintenance, operation, and storage of vehicles and equipment shall not result in a discharge or a threatened discharge to waters of the State. At no time shall the Applicant use any vehicle or equipment which leaks any substance that may impact water quality. Staging and storage areas for vehicles and equipment shall be located outside of waters of the State.
7. All excavation, construction, or maintenance activities shall follow best management practices to minimize impacts to water quality and beneficial uses. Dust control activities shall be conducted in such a manner that will not produce downstream runoff.
8. No construction material, spoils, debris, or any other substances associated with this project that may adversely impact water quality standards, shall be located in a manner which may result in a discharge or a threatened discharge to waters of the State. Designated spoil and waste areas shall be visually marked prior to any excavation and/or construction activity, and storage of the materials shall be confined to these areas.
9. All waste and/or dredged material removed shall be relocated to a legal point of disposal if applicable. A legal point of disposal is defined as one for which Waste Discharge Requirements have been established by a California Regional Water Quality Control Board, and is in full compliance therewith. Please contact Rodney Nelson, Land Disposal Unit, at (213) 620-6119 for further information.
10. The Applicant shall implement all necessary control measures to prevent the degradation of water quality from the proposed project in order to maintain compliance with the Basin Plan. The discharge shall meet all effluent limitations and toxic and effluent standards established to comply with the applicable water quality standards and other appropriate requirements, including the provisions of Sections 301, 302, 303, 306, and 307 of the Clean Water Act. This Certification does not authorize the discharge by the applicant for any other activity than specifically described in the 404 Permit.
11. The discharge shall not: a) degrade surface water communities and populations including vertebrate, invertebrate, and plant species; b) promote the breeding of mosquitoes, gnats, black flies, midges, or other pests; c) alter the color, create visual contrast with the natural appearance, nor cause aesthetically undesirable discoloration of the receiving waters; d) cause formation of sludge deposits; or e) adversely affect any designated beneficial uses.

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12. The Applicant shall allow the Regional Board and its authorized representative entry to the premises, including all mitigation sites, to inspect and undertake any activity to determine compliance with this Certification, or as otherwise authorized by the California Water Code.
13. Application of pesticides must be supervised by a certified applicator and be in conformance with manufacturer's specifications for use. Compounds used must be appropriate to the target species and habitat. All pesticides directed toward aquatic species must be approved by the Regional Board. Pesticide utilization shall be in accordance with State Water Resources Control Board Water Quality Order Nos. 2004-0008-DWQ and 2004-0009-DWQ.
14. The Applicant shall not conduct any construction activities within waters of the State during a rainfall event. The Applicant shall maintain a **five-day (5-day) clear weather forecast** before conducting any operations within waters of the State.
15. The grading, stabilization and re-vegetation will be phased to limit the exposed or working face such that the graded area can be stabilized within 24 hours after the first prediction of rain during the 5-day forecast or within 24 hours after final grading of the phased area.
16. The Applicant shall utilize the services of a qualified biologist with expertise in riparian assessments during any vegetation clearing activities. The biologist shall be available on site during construction activities to ensure that all protected areas are marked properly and ensure that no vegetation outside the specified areas is removed. The biologist shall have the authority to stop the work, as necessary, if instructions are not followed. The biologist shall be available upon request from this Regional Board for consultation within 24 hours of request of consultation.
17. No activities shall involve wet excavations (i.e., no excavations shall occur below the seasonal high water table). A minimum **5-foot** buffer zone shall be maintained above the existing groundwater level. If construction or groundwater dewatering is proposed or anticipated, the Applicant shall file a **Report of Waste Discharge** to this Regional Board and obtain any necessary NPDES permits/Waste Discharge Requirements prior to discharging waste. Sufficient time should be allowed to obtain any such permits (generally 180 days). If groundwater is encountered without the benefit of appropriate permits, the Applicant shall cease all activities in the areas where groundwater is present, file a Report of Waste Discharge to this Regional Board, and obtain any necessary permits prior to discharging waste.
18. All project/maintenance activities not included in this Certification, and which may require a permit, must be reported to the Regional Board for appropriate permitting. Bank stabilization and grading, as well as any other ground disturbances, are subject to restoration and revegetation requirements, and may require additional Certification action.

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19. All surface waters, including ponded waters, shall be diverted away from areas undergoing grading, construction, excavation, vegetation removal, and/or any other activity which may result in a discharge to the receiving water. If surface water diversions are anticipated, the Applicant shall develop and submit a **Surface Water Diversion Plan** (plan) to this Regional Board. The plan shall include the proposed method and duration of diversion activities, structure configuration, construction materials, equipment, erosion and sediment controls, and a map or drawing indicating the locations of diversion and discharge points. Contingency measures shall be a part of this plan to address various flow discharge rates. The plan shall be submitted prior to any surface water diversions. If surface flows are present, then upstream and downstream monitoring for the following shall be implemented:
- pH
  - temperature
  - dissolved oxygen
  - turbidity
  - total suspended solids(TSS)
  - Downstream TSS shall be maintained at ambient levels
  - Where natural turbidity is between 0 and 50 Nephelometric Turbidity Units (NTU), increases shall not exceed 20%. Where natural turbidity is greater than 50 NTU, increases shall not exceed 10%.

Analyses must be performed using approved US Environmental Protection Agency methods, where applicable. These constituents shall be monitored for on a daily basis during the first week of diversion and/or dewatering activities, and then on a weekly basis, thereafter, until the in-stream work is complete.

Results of the analyses shall be submitted to this Regional Board by the 15th day of each subsequent sampling month. A map or drawing indicating the locations of sampling points shall be included with each submittal. Diversion activities shall not result in the degradation of beneficial uses or exceedance of water quality objectives of the receiving waters. Any such violations may result in corrective and/or enforcement actions, including increased monitoring and sample collection.

20. The Applicant shall restore **all areas** of TEMPORARY IMPACTS to waters of the United States and all other areas of temporary disturbance which could result in a discharge or a threatened discharge to waters of the State. Restoration shall include grading of disturbed areas to pre-project contours and revegetation with native species. Restored areas shall be monitored and maintained with native species as necessary for five years. The Applicant shall implement all necessary Best Management Practices to control erosion and runoff from areas associated with this project.

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21. The Applicant shall provide COMPENSATORY MITIGATION to offset the proposed temporary impacts to **0.08 acres** of vegetation within waters of the United States through credits from the Big Tujunga Mitigation Bank. Documentation regarding this mitigation banking information shall be submitted to this Regional Board for approval prior to any disturbance within waters of the United States and shall include copies of any agreements made between the Applicant and a third party organization regarding compensatory mitigation efforts.
22. All open space and mitigation areas shall be placed within a conservation easement to ensure preservation in perpetuity. Documentation of proper easement placement shall be submitted to the Regional Board within one year.
23. The Applicant shall submit to this Regional Board **Annual Mitigation Monitoring Reports** (Annual Reports) by **May 1st** of each year for a minimum period of **five (5) years** following this issuance of 401 Certification or until mitigation success has been achieved and documented. The Annual Reports shall describe in detail all of the project/construction activities performed during the previous year and all restoration and mitigation efforts; including percent survival by plant species and percent cover. The Annual Reports shall describe the status of other agreements (e.g., mitigation banking). At a minimum the Annual Reports shall include the following documentation:
  - (a) Color photo documentation of the pre- and post-project and mitigation site conditions;
  - (b) Geographical Positioning System (GPS) coordinates in decimal-degrees format outlining the boundary of the project and mitigation areas;
  - (c) The overall status of project including a detailed schedule of work;
  - (d) Copies of all permits revised as required in Additional Condition 1;
  - (e) Water quality monitoring results for each reach (as required) compiled in an easy to interpret format;
  - (f) A certified Statement of “no net loss” of wetlands associated with this project;
  - (g) Discussion of any monitoring activities and exotic plant control efforts; and
  - (h) A certified Statement from the permittee or his/her representative that all conditions of this Certification have been met.



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28. Any modifications of the proposed project may require submittal of a new Clean Water Act Section 401 Water Quality Certification application and appropriate filing fee.
29. Coverage under this Certification may be transferred to the extent the underlying federal permit may legally be transferred and further provided that the Applicant notifies the Executive Officer at least 30 days before the proposed transfer date, and the notice includes a written agreement between the existing and new Applicants containing a specific date of coverage, responsibility for compliance with this Certification, and liability between them.
30. The Applicant or their agents shall report any noncompliance. Any such information shall be provided verbally to the Executive Officer within 24 hours from the time the Applicant becomes aware of the circumstances. A written submission shall also be provided within five days of the time the Applicant becomes aware of the circumstances. The written submission shall contain a description of the noncompliance and its cause; the period of noncompliance, including exact dates and times, and if the noncompliance has not been corrected; the anticipated time it is expected to continue and steps taken or planned to reduce, eliminate and prevent recurrence of the noncompliance. The Executive Officer, or an authorized representative, may waive the written report on a case-by-case basis if the oral report has been received within 24 hours.
31. *Enforcement:*
  - (a) In the event of any violation or threatened violation of the conditions of this Certification, the violation or threatened violation shall be subject to any remedies, penalties, process or sanctions as provided for under State law. For purposes of section 401(d) of the Clean Water Act, the applicability of any State law authorizing remedies, penalties, process or sanctions for the violation or threatened violation constitutes a limitation necessary to assure compliance with the water quality standards and other pertinent requirements incorporated into this Certification.
  - (b) In response to a suspected violation of any condition of this Certification, the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) or Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) may require the holder of any permit or license subject to this Certification to furnish, under penalty of perjury, any technical or monitoring reports the SWRCB deems appropriate, provided that the burden, including costs, of the reports shall be a reasonable relationship to the need for the reports and the benefits to be obtained from the reports.
  - (c) In response to any violation of the conditions of this Certification, the SWRCB or RWQCB may add to or modify the conditions of this Certification as appropriate to ensure compliance.

**ATTACHMENT B**

**Conditions of Certification**

**File No. 08-103**

32. This Certification shall expire **five (5) years** from date of this Certification. The Applicant shall submit a complete application prior to termination of this Certification if renewal is requested.